

(8/5/20)



The "Now it can be told" rewriting of history is the inevitable by-product of democratic government. The most recent contributions to the genre, however, have become more and more distasteful in their growing concentration upon the gratuitous harassment and debunking of former Presidents. The recent contributions of Lawrence O'Brien and Kenneth O'Donnell, for example, set new lows for political shabbiness.

One suffers a queasiness in the stomach to read of a trusted confidential aide proudly describing his role at President Johnson's right hand by day and plotting against him at Hickory Hill by night.

Consider the bad taste to write of a dead President that he would risk American lives for two years beyond deciding to withdraw from Vietnam for the political expediency of re-election. Who can believe that a President would make such a decision two years before implementing it leaving himself at the mercy of unforeseeable and unpredictable events.

It is true that one of these authors is struggling for elective office, and the other is trying to unite a party on a program diametrically opposed to what it carried out in office. Cheap shots and expediency are thus not unexpected. But such betrayal of personal trust is demeaning and deplorable.

-2-

Also, it must not be forgotten that all involved acquiesced in the decision of the Party leadership to heighten our involvement in Vietnam and, in fact, supported the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and the appropriations for our immensely increased military involvement during the Johnson Administration.

The revelations themselves are trifling things. In substance they are either feeble, inaccurate, ignorant, or preposterous. It is no credit to anybody to demean one President by ascribing to his predecessor views which were never articulated when they could still have made a difference.

For these reasons, I cannot believe these so-called revelations, even though I find it easy to comprehend the desire of the liberal wing of the national Democratic Party to fly the white flag of peace-at-any-price advocacy instead of the dirty grey banner of vacillation.